

Welcome to the Homeless Liaison list. This listserv is a communication between the SD-DOE State Homeless Coordinator and the school districts' liaisons. Periodically, you will be receiving a short newsletter pertaining to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. If you have questions or comments, please direct them to Laura.Johnson-Frame@state.sd.us. Where it is appropriate, your questions and comments will be shared with all liaisons across South Dakota.

*Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program
Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
Amended by NCLB Act of 2001*

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Automatic Eligibility for Free School Meals

The reauthorization of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 expands federal child nutrition programs to assist **homeless and runaway children and youth** by providing:

- Automatic eligibility for free school meals to homeless and runaway children
- Streamlined procedures to document such eligibility
- Full school year eligibility for free school meals
- Federal nutrition funds for shelters that serve children and youth up to age 18

The reauthorization Act confers automatic eligibility for free school meals on migrant children served through the Migrant Education Program and runaway children and youth served through the three grant programs established under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA): Basic Center Program, Transitional Living Program for Older Homeless Youth, and Street Outreach Program.

Documentation of Free Meal Eligibility

The McKinney-Vento Act requires every school district to designate a local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youth. The liaisons ensure that children receive the educational and other services for which they are eligible – including free school meals. Local educational agency liaisons, homeless or domestic violence shelter directors and RHYA service providers may provide documentation that children are homeless or runaway to school food service directors or other officials who determine school meal eligibility.

The documentation must include the child's name or a list of their names, effective date(s), and the signature of the local educational agency liaison, homeless or domestic violence shelter director or RHYA service provider. This list is acceptable in lieu of a school meal application usually submitted by the child's parent or guardian and is sufficient for school officials to approve the child's eligibility for free school meals.

Full School Year Eligibility

Once a student has been certified for free meals, including when based on designation as homeless or runaway by a local educational agency liaison, homeless or domestic violence shelter director or RHYA service provider, the eligibility remains effective for the remainder of the school year. This policy holds even if children or youth move into permanent housing and are no longer homeless or served by RHYA programs. In such instances, a new eligibility determination shall be made in the subsequent school year. Schools are allowed to continue a student's eligibility from the previous school year for 30 operating days into the subsequent school year, or until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever occurs first.

Food Stamps and Homeless Children and Youth

Youth who live in a shelter or entirely alone should be able to apply for food stamps on their own. Their parents' income should not be used in calculating whether they are eligible for food stamps. If they live in a shelter, service providers may assist such youth by providing letters for them to bring to food stamp offices.

Homeless people living in shelters are eligible for food stamps, even if the shelter provides meals. The food stamp office has special rules that allow homeless families to receive food stamps, even if they do not have photo IDs or do not have a regular address. The food stamp office may accept as ID the word of a shelter director who can identify the food stamp applicant. If a household's income is low enough, the food stamp office must issue food stamps within 7 days of when the household applies, and in some states sooner.

For more information go to

http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/policy/Reauthorization_memos_04/2004-07-19.pdf

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